

again face flooding or other natural disasters. But the modifications have added an extra measure of safety to life in the Valley of the Sun.

At a time when Government-built dams are the target of criticism by some, I am encouraged that my colleagues in the House, and in the State and local government, have not lost sight of the many benefits that flow from multi-purpose projects like the Theodore Roosevelt Dam.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE TOWN OF ALTON, NH

HON. WILLIAM H. ZELIFF, JR.

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 17, 1996

Mr. ZELIFF. Mr. Speaker, let me extend my sincerest congratulations to the town of Alton, NH, as it celebrates its bicentennial anniversary on June 16, 1996. It is a pleasure to commemorate such a milestone event and recognize this New Hampshire village.

The people of Alton have preserved the town's historic past and traditions. Located on the southern tip of Lake Winnepesaukee, the town of Alton offers a pristine and unmatched beauty that attracts both residents and visitors of New Hampshire to this area. Whether it is the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee or the surrounding mountains, Alton offers unlimited enjoyment for all people throughout the year.

Alton's original town limits consisted of sections from: New Durham, Gilmanton, Gilford, and Wolfeboro. Over the years Alton has developed into seven neighborhoods: Alton Village, South Alton, East Alton, West Alton, Alton Bay, Alton Mountain, and The Gore. These seven boroughs have established their own identity, while strengthening and propelling the town of Alton into a leading New Hampshire community.

Once known as New Durham Gore, Alton established the traditional town meeting format of government that is still being practiced today. It is refreshing to be associated with people, such as the Alton residents, who have not forgotten their past and traditions.

I have had the opportunity to work with the people of Alton on many different occasions over the years. Most recently, I visited to evaluate the damage caused by the devastating dam break. After this visit I have come to fully understand the love, generosity, and big-heartedness of this town. I commend their independence, character, dedication, and mutual respect for one another.

Allow me to wish the town of Alton a happy bicentennial, and I appreciate the opportunity to be included in its celebration. It is an honor to represent the town of Alton in the U.S. Congress.

NEW BRITAIN ROTARY CLUB ANNIVERSARY

HON. NANCY L. JOHNSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 17, 1996

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and appreciation that

I rise today to congratulate the members of the Rotary Club of New Britain, CT, as they celebrate their 75th anniversary.

It was on April 20, 1921, that Leon Sprague, the Rotary's organizer and charter president, brought into being the first local organization of professional, industrial, and business executives to serve the community. From the very beginning, the members of the Rotary Club of New Britain have committed themselves to their creed, "service above self," by generously providing the community with time, money, and unselfish service in the important fields of education, orphanages, hospitals, civic amenities, and scholarships to needy students. I am so proud of the men and women of the Rotary who work tirelessly to assure that needs of citizens are met.

Today, I congratulate the Rotary Club of New Britain on its anniversary and I commend its members on their dedication and lasting contributions.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 17, 1996

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 110, H.R. 956, conference report on product liability reform, while I was present on the floor and inserted my voting card, it appears that my vote was not recorded. I do want to note that I voted in favor of H.R. 956 when it originally passed the House.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH AND PATIENT PROTECTION ACT OF 1996

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 17, 1996

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about disturbing trends in contemporary health care, and to discuss H.R. 3222, The Hippocratic Oath and Patient Protection Act of 1996, which I introduced to halt those trends and protect strong doctor-patient relationships.

Mr. Speaker, more and more doctors and patients are enrolled with managed care and HMO's. The Wall Street Journal reports on the financial success of HMO's by stating it has left them "so awash in cash they don't know what to do with it all."

U.S. Healthcare, for example, is a major, corporate HMO with 2.4 million members. It makes \$1 million a day in profits. Its CEO, Leonard Abramson, walked away from his company's recent merger with Aetna with a personal profit of nearly \$1 billion.

Clearly, there is a built-in conflict between a for-profit HMO and the needs of a patient. The less money spent on providing care for the patient, the more money the company makes. It's that simple.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we must all work to control health care costs. However, we must also ensure that health care decisions are made by doctors using medical rationale with their patients' interests at heart, not insurance

administrators using financial spreadsheets with their own economic interests at heart. And most importantly, we must preserve the fundamental core of successful health care—the strong doctor-patient relationship.

Unfortunately, with the growth of managed care and the power of large insurance companies, serious problems are developing which, in my view, threaten the doctor-patient relationship.

Many HMO's use what are essentially "free-for-denying-service" systems, which pay doctors for denying care and penalize them for providing it. Doctors under some plans lose up to 50 cents of compensation for every dollar they order spent on emergency care. And according to a Mathematica Policy Research study, 60 percent of managed care plans in this country currently place their providers at some financial risk for the cost of patient care. This places doctors in very difficult situations, as they are asked to base their decisions on criteria that is contrary to what they were taught and swore to uphold.

You would have to be patently insane to sign on with an HMO you know is going to pay your doctor not to treat you. So some insurance companies are taking steps to make sure you don't know what they are doing. They keep their incentive plans secret from their customers, and in many cases keep both patients and doctors in the dark about the formulas used to approve or deny coverage. Therefore, doctors and consumers signing on do not know what they are getting themselves into, and insurers are free to make arbitrary decisions without outside scrutiny.

Further, many HMO contracts contain blatant gag rules that tell doctors what they can and cannot say to their patients. Last year, for example, Kaiser Permanente of Ohio told its doctors not to discuss any possible treatments with patients before checking with the company's consultants.

These outrageous clauses strike at the heart of informed consent and health care ethics—someone considering an operation should have all the relevant information to make their decision, and doctors must be able to provide that information.

These problems are serious enough that Massachusetts has already passed a law banning gag rules, while New York and several other State legislatures are considering bills to deal with these issues. Before recess, I introduced legislation that will take three steps to preserve strong doctor-patient relationships. My bill has already been endorsed by Consumers Union, the American Nurses Association, the Vermont Psychological Association, the American Psychological Association, the National Medical Association, and the Gray Panthers.

First, my legislation will ban outright incentives to deny appropriate care, and ensure safeguards are installed so doctors are not placed at substantial financial risk for patient care.

Second, my bill prohibits gag rules and other interference in doctors' communications regarding patient care. It is the only legislation that safeguards doctors' communications with their colleagues and the public as well as their patients.

Third, to ensure neither doctors nor patients are kept in the dark about what their insurer is doing, my legislation provides for open, honest discussion of practices key to patient care